

Message Text

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46

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 241515Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8741

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1351

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: SREF, CB, UY

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ASYLUM FOR CAMBODIANS

REFS: A) MVD 1345; B) MVD 1229; C) STATE 85373; D) STATE 84161

1. SUMMARY: GKR OFFICIALS HERE STILL EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO LEAVE URUGUAY WHERE THEY FEEL COMPLETELY ISOLATED. AMBASSADOR ONG BELIEVES THERE IS A CHANCE THAT A NATIONALIST COALITION GOVERNMENT IN WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE A ROLE WILL EMERGE IN CAMBODIA. THUS, HE WANTS NEITHER TO CONTACT ICEM NOR DISPOSE OF GKR PROPERTY HERE. HE AND SOM WISH TO GO TO U.S., ONG BECAUSE IT WILL FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH CAMBODIANS AND SOM BECAUSE HE HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO. ATTACHEH OUN PREFERS RELOCATION TO THAILAND AND DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE AS TO HOW THIS MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

2. DURING COURSE OF LONG CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, GKR AMBASSADOR ONG EXPANDED ON INFO CONTAINED IN REFTEL B. MOST OF ONG'S COMMENTS WERE TIED TO HIS HOPE (BASED, HE SAID, ON VERY SKETCHY INFORMATION) THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN PHNOM PENH MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE A NATIONALIST COALITION. IF THIS WERE TO OCCUR, HE BELIEVES HE WOULD HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY AS MANY NON-COMMUNIST GRUNK OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATS ARE LIFELONG FRIENDS OF HIS. CONSEQUENTLY, HE DOES NOT WISH TO CONTACT ICEM OUT OF FEAR THAT COMMUNISTS WOULD LEARN OF IT AND USE IT TO CONVINCE PHNOM PENH THAT HE IS ABANDONING HIS COUNTRY.

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3. ONG SAID THAT AS LONG AS THERE IS HOPE THAT "HANOI-CONTROLLED

ELEMENTS" WILL NOT GOVERN CAMBODIA HE DID NOT WANT TO MAKE A BREAK WITH PHNOM PENH. HE REFERRED TO GKR EMBASSY POSSESSIONS HERE, SAID HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM AND COULD NOT SELL THEM TO SUPPORT HIM OR HIS STAFF AS LONG AS A COALITION GOVERNMENT WAS A POSSIBILITY. (IMPLYING, THAT HE MIGHT DO JUST THAT IF A HANOI-CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT WERE TO ASSUME POWER IN CAMBODIA). WHEN ASKED IF DEPARTING FOR THE U.S. WOULD NOT EQUALLY OPEN HIM TO CHARGES THAT HE IS ABANDONING HIS POST AND, PRESUMABLY, HIS COUNTRY, ONG SAID NOT. HE HAS A SERIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEM (COLON) WHICH NEEDS MAJOR SURGERY AND PHNOM PENH WOULD ACCEPT THAT. HE IS VERY ANXIOUS TO GO TO THE U.S. BUT STATED "IN CONFIDENCE" THAT HIS PRIMARY PURPOSE WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH CAMBODIANS IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON AND TO BE WHERE COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARIS ARE GOOD. HERE, HE SAID, HE AND HIS PEOPLE ARE ISOLATED NOT ONLY FROM URUGUAYANS (BY LANGUAGE AND CULTURE) BUT ALSO FROM NEWS AND CONTACTS BECAUSE OF DISTANCE AND THE LACK (AND EXCESSIVE COST OF) COMMUNICATIONS.

4. ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, FIRST SECRETARY SOM CHUON HAS NOWHERE BUT THE U.S. TO WHICH TO GO. HOWEVER, ATTACHE OUN LIENG CHEAT, HIS WIFE, FIVE CHILDREN AND SERVANT, WOULD PREFER TO GO TO THAILAND. GIVEN THE AMBASSADOR'S ATTITUDE RE CONTACTING ICEM AND THE LACK OF A UNHCR PRESENCE HERE, IS THERE SOME OTHER MEANS BY WHICH OUN AND HOUSEHOLD MIGHT BE RELOCATED IN THAILAND?
SIRACUSA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL ASYLUM, REFUGEE RELIEF, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchantr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MONTEV01351
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750144-0644
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750421/aaaaatdg.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 MVD 1345, 75 MVD 1229, 75 STATE 85373, 75 STATE 84161
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchantr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2003 by buchantr>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR ASYLUM FOR CAMBODIANS
TAGS: SREF, CB, UY, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006